

leave of absence from the House Armed Services Committee in order to serve on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. I understand that I will retain my seniority on the Armed Services Committee for the duration of my leave.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Sincerely,

JAMES R. LANGEVIN,
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

ELECTION OF MAJORITY MEMBERS TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution (H. Res. 75) and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 75

Resolved, That the following named Members and Delegate be and are hereby elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

(1) COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES.—Mr. Meek of Florida (to rank immediately after Mr. Cummings).

(2) COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES.—Mr. Boren.

(3) COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY.—Mr. Berman, Mr. Boucher, Mr. Nadler, Mr. Scott of Virginia, Mr. Watt, Ms. Zoe Lofgren of California, Ms. Jackson-Lee of Texas, Ms. Waters, Mr. Meehan, Mr. Delahunt, Mr. Wexler, Ms. Linda T. Sánchez of California, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Johnson of Georgia, Mr. Gutierrez, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Weiner, Mr. Schiff, Mr. Davis of Alabama, Mr. Ellison.

(4) COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES.—Mr. Kildee, Mr. Faleomavaega, Mr. Abercrombie, Mr. Ortiz, Mr. Pallone, Mrs. Christensen, Mrs. Napolitano, Mr. Holt, Mr. Grijalva, Ms. Bordallo, Mr. Costa, Mr. Boren, Mr. Sarbanes, Mr. George Miller of California, Mr. Markey, Mr. DeFazio, Mr. Hinchey, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Kind, Mrs. Capps, Mr. Inslee, Mr. Udall of Colorado, Mr. Baca, Ms. Solis, Ms. Herseth, Mr. Shuler.

(5) COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.—Mr. Costello, Ms. Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas, Ms. Woolsey, Mr. Udall of Colorado, Mr. Wu, Mr. Baird, Mr. Miller of North Carolina, Mr. Lipinski, Mr. Lampson, Ms. Giffords, Mr. McNerney, Mr. Rothman, Mr. Honda, Mr. Matheson, Mr. Ross, Mr. Chandler, Mr. Carnahan, Mr. Melancon, Mr. Hill, Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Wilson of Ohio.

(6) COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS.—Ms. Berkley (to rank immediately after Mr. Doyle), Mr. Walz of Minnesota.

Mr. MCGOVERN (during the reading). Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

Mr. PEARCE. Madam Speaker, I object.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Clerk continued to read the resolution.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 47

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove the name of Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD as a cosponsor from H.R. 47. Her name was placed on this bill in error.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

QUESTION OF PERSONAL PRIVILEGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. For what purpose does the gentleman from Texas rise?

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, I rise to a question of personal privilege.

Madam Speaker, the question of personal privilege to which I rise is one regarding the tarnish that is on my reputation and the reputation of others here in this body.

We had heard for the last couple of years the term "culture of corruption"; and, frankly, one of the things that I looked forward to is an end to all this discussion about corruption that tarnishes each one of us. And I know for all of the people whom I am close to it is a big deal as far as our reputation when it is tarnished.

And so what I would submit is that in the last 2 weeks that we have not cleared a culture of corruption; that a cloud of corruption has hovered over this body, it hovers over me now, tarnishing all that we are and that I am. And to have an American territory excluded from a minimum wage bill that directly benefits one of the Members, in fact the Speaker and a company—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will suspend.

Under rule IX, the gentleman has not stated a basis for a question of personal privilege.

Mr. GOHMERT. Point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will state his point of order.

Mr. GOHMERT. Under rule IX, it is provided in the precedents that any time someone's reputation has been tarnished or sullied, it may be addressed.

I would in fact direct you to the second page of section 708 regarding the prior usage for the question of personal privilege. And you will find on the second page of the reference in section 708 of the Rules and Practice Manual that Former Speaker Jim Wright rose to a question of personal privilege and he addressed a matter that was sully the reputation of the House, and him in particular, and addressed it in order to clear the air.

If you look underneath that in that same page, it references Speaker Gingrich, who rose to a question of personal privilege in order to clear the air and the cloud and allegation of corruption that had arisen. And then, beneath that you will see a reference of a precedent from Speaker HASTERT in 2000 who

rose to a question of personal privilege to clear the air and clear the question of malfeasance over the issue of the selection of the Chaplain.

□ 1830

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would be pleased to examine the basis on which the gentleman from Texas would rely, individually, to be recognized on a point of personal privilege.

Mr. GOHMERT. Well, then perhaps it would be better for the Speaker to come so we can clear the air and get this matter behind us so we can move forward in a bipartisan manner. If it was a staff member or someone else that allowed American Samoa to be exempted, we can get it cleared. The question of personal privilege would disappear. I would rise to make that—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will suspend.

If the gentleman has documents, newspaper articles, or the like, that identify him personally, he may rely on them as a basis for a question of personal privilege.

Mr. GOHMERT. I have a constitutional point of order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may state his point of order.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, under Article I, section 6, a matter that was discussed at some length in the past year, it says that for any speech or debate in either House, they, the Senators and Representatives, shall not be questioned in any other place.

This is the only place in which a question of personal privilege, in which a matter that is tarnishing anyone's reputation or everyone's reputation in here may be addressed. If I will not be allowed to go further with the question of personal privilege, I would ask the Speaker to rise to a question of personal privilege as the last three Speakers have under Article I, section 6, clear the air, clear the cloud of corruption that is hovering over us so we can move forward in a clean and wholesome, bipartisan environment. And I will do as the Parliamentarian has requested.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the precedents of this House, the Chair would be pleased to examine any documentary evidence the gentleman might bring to her attention in order to be able to proceed on a question of personal privilege. The Chair presently has no basis for decision. The Chair would ask the gentleman to conform to precedent to be allowed to proceed. The Chair has not been provided anything to examine as the basis of his question of personal privilege.

Mr. GOHMERT. Parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman may state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. GOHMERT. Is the Speaker asking or directing that I bring in articles

and things into this House to present to the Speaker here in this floor of the House?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair at this moment is unable to identify a valid basis for a question of personal privilege. The Chair would encourage the gentleman to give the Chair a basis for decision.

Mr. GOHMERT. The law on its face and what we just passed exempted a territory. It should be very clear.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is not recognized.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to 15 U.S.C. 1024(a), and the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Member of the House to the Joint Economic Committee:

Mrs. MALONEY, New York.

KEEP ECONOMY ROLLING

(Mr. FEENEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FEENEY. Madam Speaker, recently President Bush wrote that now is not the time to increase taxes on the American people. As the stock market hits an all-time high, employment is at an all-time high, unemployment is at a record low. Unfortunately, the first couple weeks in this House is not a good indication of Democratic leadership.

In week number one, we effectively repealed the three-fifths requirement to raise taxes.

In week number two, we passed a so-called PAYGO law that says any of the new liberal spending programs are going to be accompanied with huge new tax increases on the people of America.

And today, with the first major tax increase in 10 years, \$7 billion is put on the backs of American energy producers that will directly translate to higher gas prices at the pump.

I ask all of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, to sign a letter that is on your desk where we encourage the President to veto any bad tax increases, and we pledge to sustain that veto. Democrats and Republicans alike ought to keep this economy rolling. Please sign the letter that is on your desk. I welcome all of my colleagues to join me.

REMEMBERING WILFRED G. GOODEN

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Wilfred G. Gooden, who passed in January of this year. Wilfred G. Gooden was

a philanthropist, and certainly someone who loved his country, but loved service.

Born in Jamaica, West Indies in the Westmoreland area, he was a naturalized citizen. He came to New York City. In his commitment to serving the community, he became a master builder and opened a construction company in 1961 where he created jobs for young men and women in the Harlem area. He was a master artisan, a carpenter, a perfectionist in his work.

As he became an astute businessperson, he also was concerned about affordable housing for many in the New York area. Mayor David Dinkins appointed him to have the opportunity to devise a housing program for the City of Houston. But yet he continued to do more, and he was a great philanthropist, providing clothing and opportunity for the people of Jamaica. We pay great tribute to Wilfred Gooden, and we mourn his loss.

RAILROAD OVERSIGHT

(Mr. KUHLMAN of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KUHLMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to an issue that concerns all of us, and that is railroad safety.

On Tuesday night, there was a train derailment near my congressional district in East Rochester, Monroe County, New York. Fortunately, no one was injured. There have been dozens of other derailments in New York: Recently, on December 28 along route 15 in Gang Mills, in which cars were carrying butane.

According to an online Federal Railroad Administration database, defective tracks have been the number one cause of train derailments since 1996 in New York and Monroe County.

Madam Speaker, I understand the role of railroads and the importance they serve in transporting goods and people across the country. As a member of the House Transportation Committee which oversees the railroad industry, I firmly believe that Congress must provide more thorough oversight of this industry.

Furthermore, I believe that Congress, CSX, and the Federal Railroad Administration and the Department of Environmental Conservation must work together to identify what must be done to avoid similar disasters in the future.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to create a safer, more efficient rail system for everyone.

AMERICAN SAMOA UNDER FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I just want to make a point of

clarification for my friend here from Texas, insinuating and implying there was something special given to my district, American Samoa, over this minimum wage issue.

I suggest the gentleman should read the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. American Samoa has been subjected to the minimum wage law since 1938. So I suggest to my Republican friends, they ought to check their law and find out what the situation has been.

The Northern Mariana Islands was not even in existence for the past 50 years, only until 1976. So I want to clarify that for the record. And I suggest to my friend from Texas, read the law before you start making accusations against the Speaker, insinuating and implying that her character, that she applied a double standard to the company that supposedly has been operating in my district. I suggest to my friend from Texas, read the law before you start attacking the Speaker on this matter.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION CRISIS IN ARIZONA

(Ms. GIFFORDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, with the completion of the first 100 hours, I stand here today to discuss an issue of critical importance to southern Arizona, and that is our illegal immigration crisis.

Let me point out two recent events. On January 12, a Border Patrol agent had a deadly altercation with an illegal immigrant crossing into our district. That investigation is going on at this moment. A couple of weeks ago, members of the National Guard unit assigned to work with the Border Patrol were threatened by an armed gang that came into our country and then left. That incident is being looked at.

While many questions still surround these recent incidents, one thing is crystal clear: Now that our 100 hours are over, we must address the illegal immigration crisis and secure the border today.

We are putting our Border Patrol and the National Guard under tremendous strain. It is our responsibility to provide them with the necessary resources and the tools they need.

Fighting for a comprehensive immigration plan must be a priority for this Congress, Democrats and Republicans working together.

STRONG SUPPORT FOR H.R. 6, CLEAN ENERGY ACT

(Mr. BRALEY of Iowa asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Madam Speaker, I rise this afternoon to express my strong support for H.R. 6, the CLEAN